C and D posts are being implemented in this Ministry

(b) This Ministry undertakes direct recruitment only for Group D posts and the Selection Committee set up for this purpose includes representatives of Scheduled Castes/Tribes and Minority Communities.

(c) None, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

India's relations with USSR

968. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM:
DR. RATNAKAR PANDEY:
SHRI JAGADISH JANI:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the anxiety in the country due to mixed signals emanating regarding our relations with the USSR;

(b) what steps have been taken by Government to build up a solid economic relationship with various republics in the USSR;

(c) what initiatives have been taken in the last two months to strengthen our relations with the USSR; and

(d) the details of steps taken to expand cultural and economic ties with all republics of USSR?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) and (b) Political and economic restructuring in the USSR is proceeding at a very rapid pace. Government is constantly monitoring the situation with a view to ensuring that bilateral relations are not adversely affected. In the light of the on-going changes within the USSR, Government intends to establish and strengthen direct relations with the Republics in accordance with the new constitutional structures emerging in the USSR.

(c) EAM paid an official visit to Moscow from 14—18 November 1991 at the invitation of his Soviet counterpart for detailed discussions with the Soviet and Russian leaderships on all aspects of our bilateral relations.

(d) Framework agreements on co-operation in economic and cultural spheres were signed with the Republic of Uzbekistan in August 1991 Government is in the process of establishing direct contact with a view to finalising similar mutually-beneficial cooperation agreements with the other Republics of the USSR.

Fleet available with the Shipping Corporation of India Limited

969. PROF. SAURIN BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the details of fleet with which the Shipping Corporation of India Limited is presently functioning alongwith the age of each of its ship and vessel;

(b) the details of foreign exchange earned and spent by the Corporation during the past two years;

(c) the details of proposals received from the overseas shipyards of various origins, capacities, cost and other stipulation for supplies of fleet to Shipping Corporation of India Limited during past one year;

(d) whether it is a fact that the SCI is losing more due to inefficiencies in Operational Management of the Shipping industry; and

(e) if so, what are the details thereof and what remedial steps have been taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Presently the Shipping Corporation of India has a fleet of 127 vessels. A list is enclosed as Annexure. [*See* Appendix CLXII, Annexure No. 24]

(b) The foreign exchange earned/saved and spent by Shipping Corporation